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An Analysis of Chairman Les Aspin's Proposed
Campaign Plan for a Gulf War

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature

Wm Kaiser

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Abstract of

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This paper addresses Representative Aspin's campaign plan for a war to liberate Kuwait. To accomplish this, first the Iraqi and Coalition military situations are examined, and then Mr Aspin's comments and the view points of the experts that appeared before his House Armed Services Committee are used to outline a phased operational plan. Finally, five questions are asked to assess the military effectiveness of the plan, and several recommendations are made based on that analysis. Mr. Aspin's campaign plan has merit. It adheres very closely to the doctrinal principles of the United States (US) armed forces. However, there is room for improvement in the areas of strategic targeting, operational mobility, and ground campaign objectives.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

On 8 January 1991, Les Aspin, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, presented a report before members of the House of Representatives and the news media that outlined a three phased campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.¹ The outlined course of action warrants closer examination. It is quite likely that Chairman Aspin's concept of the operation accurately depicts the actual US campaign strategy. He stated during the presentation " that his conclusions about ... how the war would be fought were based on numerous conversations with officials in government and on the outside."² It's obvious that his ideas were strongly influenced by the military experts that appeared before his committee in December, and offered their views of how to fight a war against Iraq. Among them were: retired Air Force General Charles Donnelly, former commander in chief of US Air Forces in Europe; retired Army General Fredrick Croesen, former commander in chief of US Army Europe; retired Marine Corps General George Crist, former commander in chief of the US Central Command; and a host of other retired military leaders and strategic analysts. During their presentations to the committee, each of these experts described a phased campaign very similar to Mr. Aspin's. The main differences being that their concepts contained more detail (especially on the third phase), and the predictions varied on the length of the conflict and number of casualties.³ This expert testimony and the profusion of articles now appearing in the printed media with similar military

strategies lend credibility to Chairman Aspin's conclusions.

The strong possibility that it is a fairly accurate assessment of Central Command's actual campaign plan, provides a unique opportunity to conduct an analysis of the effectiveness of a potential campaign plan. Unlike studying a historical case and developing counter-factual arguments, this type of examination could provide real-time, real-world results for comparison. (Besides this, a study of the current gulf crisis is just plain professionally prudent.)

The purpose of this paper will be to conduct a strategic and operational level analysis of Representative Aspin's three phased campaign option. Chapter two will highlight some of the major points in the current Iraqi military situation. Chapter three will describe the general coalition military situation. Chapter four outlines the campaign plan. Chapter five analyzes the strategic and operational effectiveness of the plan. The final chapter will provide recommendations on the paper's findings.

CHAPTER II: THE IRAQI MILITARY SITUATION

IRAQI WAR AIMS

Iraq's national aim--annexation of Kuwait--was a result of Saddam Hussein's ambitions, the country's economic woes, and the post-war levels of militarization in the society. It was also a stepping stone to the larger goal of regional dominance.

The year 1988 found the Iraqi government in a classic bind. Prosecution of an eight year war with Iran had plunged the country deep into debt (not to mention the cost in lives, lost revenues, and destroyed industrial and economic abilities). "In order to mount its end-of- the-war blitzkrieg Iraq had to virtually restructure its society. It ordered a total mobilization, a most costly operation both in human resources and in cash."¹ At war termination there were over a million Iraqi men serving under arms in a country with a population of about eighteen million. Large numbers of high cost weapon systems-- SCUD missiles, aircraft, armored vehicles--had been purchased, far more than what would ever be needed defensively. On top of all of this, there was no measurable gain to show at the end of the war for the terrific costs.

The situation became even more difficult when Iraqi post-war attempts to invest in economic recovery and industrialization were hindered by the creditor nations of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, calling their war loans due. Repayment of the loans diverted cash from the recovery effort. The diversion of capital from

production reduced Iraq's ability to earn the monies needed to both repay those loans, and to expand the economic base and create more jobs. With a serious job shortage, the government couldn't afford to return the men under arms to civilian life, nor could they afford to pay and support such a large force. The situation was a self perpetuating problem that only needed one more ingredient to explode--ambitious and ruthless leadership.²

Saddam Hussein became president in 1979. A year later, his designs on Iranian territory started the eight year war with Iran, that induced Iraq's economic problems. The lack of any real gains in this war had not stifled Hussein's ambitions. In July 1990, he "told Defense & Foreign Affairs [correspondents] in an exclusive meeting, that in the post-Cold War world there would be a number of regional power centers... he was steadfast in his belief that... Iraq would be the dominant power in the region stretching from Egypt to Iran."³ According to the article, Iraq's August 2nd invasion was the beginning of the process to dominate the region and it listed Kuwait as only the first in a line of probable countries sequenced for domination.⁴

The annexation of Kuwait provided Saddam with power. Control of Iraq's and Kuwait's oil production, in combination with the military ability to coerce Saudi Arabia would allow Saddam to manipulate oil prices and begin regional domination.

Undoubtedly, Hussein was surprised by the international response to the Kuwaiti invasion (and potential Saudi Arabia invasion). He had not anticipated such an immediate and

determined display of American commitment against his army's actions, or the formation of such a diverse coalition of countries willing to enforce the United Nation resolutions against his country. Nevertheless, he remains publically firm on retaining his only territorial war gain. " The return of Kuwait is a fact and not a claim. It is the 19th province on the maps of Iraq, with its long history in the present and future."⁵ In early January, he told the more than one million members of his armed forces, "that they were facing a long and costly war whose aims would be to hold Kuwait, to drive foreign forces out of Saudi Arabia and to create a Palestinian homeland by confronting Israel."⁶ His aims are clear, and it appears that once again Iraqi military force will be the means of choice.

IRAQI MILITARY WAYS and MEANS

The Iraqi military seems to have two strategic targets. The first is the will of the American people. Saddam Hussien's strategy is to fight a protracted defensive campaign of attrition. He doubts that the American public will long support a war with heavy casualties, and once told the American Ambassador to Baghdad, "yours is a society which can not accept 10,000 casualties in one battle."⁷ He is apparently willing to accept thousands of Iraqi casualties, "believing that he may be able to exact a high casualty toll in ground combat and secure an acceptable settlement from there."⁸ The other strategic target is the alliance. Both Saddam Hussein and Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz

have publicly announced that they will attack Israel if military force is used against Iraq by the coalition. The objective is to splinter the alliance by forcing the Israeli military to become involved and possibly transform the crisis into an Arab-Israeli conflict.⁹

Eight years of war have helped mold the Iraqi military into a formidable opponent. An evaluation by the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College assesses their capabilities as:¹⁰

- Armor heavy, fielding large numbers of T-72 tanks which they would use in massed armor formations.
- Rich in long range artillery, and apt to take the Soviet approach to fire support.
- Employs large numbers of attack helicopters in hunter killer groups.
- Possessing a large, mostly modern air force capable of deep interdiction and battle field interdiction.
- Capable and doctrinally attuned to the employment of chemical weapons.
- Capable of firing large quantities of SCUD variants.
- Tenacious defenders of their homeland, and well practiced with intricate defensive systems.
- Doctrinally inclined towards fighting set-piece battles. Lure the enemy into a kill zone, break his momentum with artillery, launch an armor-heavy counter attack.
- Practiced in strategic deception.
- Capable of taking up the Pan-Arab banner against Israel
- Displayed skill at flexible/adaptable problem solving

The same report assesses them vulnerable to:

- high quality electronic warfare
- well integrated combined arms force(their experience is against masses of fanatical light infantry with very limited armor and artillery support)
- air war against their cities
- air battle could be quickly won if sufficient air assets were available against the substantial numbers of MIRAGE and MIG-29 fighters

Since the invasion, Iraqi forces have continued to strengthen

their defensive positions in Kuwait in anticipation of a coalition offensive. Figure 1 describes their extensive defensive preparations and force deployments. Troop and equipment strengths are listed below:

Iraqi Forces¹¹

Strategic Weapons

- Unknown quantities chemical weapons (Nerve, Mustard)
- At least 800 Ballistic Missiles (30 permanent sites, approx 75 mobile launchers)

Air Forces

- 16 Bombers (TU-16/22, H-6D)
- 275 Fighters (only approx 60 modern-- Mirage F1 and Mig-29)
- 360 Attack/Dual Role Aircraft (Mig-23, SU-7/20/24/25, J-6)

Ground Forces

- 1,000,000 Ground Troops* (240,000 Republican Guard, 260,000 Regular Army, 500,000 Mobilized Reserves)
- 5,500 Main Battle Tanks** (only 500 modern T-72's, approx 1,000 T-62's many with add-on armor)
- 3,200 Armored Personnel Carriers+
- 7,700 Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery++
- 160 Helicopters

Naval Forces

- 18 Patrol Boats and up to 25 other types of small naval vessels
- Unknown number mines

* Approximately 510,000 in Kuwait/Southern Iraq area, 120,000 on Turkish border, 85,000 in vicinity Baghdad, remainder unknown

** 4,000 in Kuwait/Southern Iraq area

+ 2,500 in Kuwait/Souther Iraq area

++ 2,700 Field Artillery and Rocket Launchers in Kuwait/Southern Iraq area

CHAPTER III: COALITION MILITARY SITUATION

The coalition of countries that deployed forces to the gulf area in response to the United Nations sanctions is the largest and most diverse alliance in history. " The military forces from over 27 countries are now directly involved in either Desert Shield or in the maritime enforcement of economic sanctions."¹ These ground, sea and air forces come from Eastern and Western Europe, Northern and Central America, the Middle East, Asia and Australia. While this broad-based and unified action can be seen as a positive step toward the concept of international collective security, it will require masterful diplomacy to wield an alliance with so many differing motives and ideologies as a weapon.

COALITION AIMS

The coalition members support the United Nations' (UN) resolutions against Iraq, and share two strategic aims--the prevention of further Iraqi aggression, and the restoration of the Kuwaiti government. All allies do support the use of military means to defend Saudi Arabia (or another country), and to enforce the UN economic blockade. However, not all alliance members will support a strategy involving offensive military action to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

The current command and control arrangements "call for the Saudi army commander to coordinate maneuvers among the Arab

forces in the country... An offensive launched from Saudi soil against Iraqi troops or against Iraq would be undertaken only after President Bush and King Fahd had both approved it. [Once approved]... American forces would be free to operate entirely under their own commander without interference from the Saudi military."² While speaking to reporters at the end of his ten country tour, Secretary Baker said "that except for Syria, the nations of the anti-Iraq coalition were in agreement on the timing and necessity of force to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait after midnight Tuesday."³ In essence, Central Command(CENTCOM) can plan on directing the offensive employment of US, British, French, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian and Kuwaiti air, land and sea forces.

COALITION MEANS

The coalition forces are armed with a variety of modern main battle tanks, attack aircraft, armored personnel carriers and supporting weapons systems of Soviet, French, British and American manufacture. The general troop dispositions are listed in figure 1. Troop and equipment densities are listed below:

Coalition Forces⁴

Air Forces (Combined Air Force and Naval Assets)

- 218 Bombers (All US -B-52/F-111/F-15E/A-6)
- 298 Fighters (US-212, Allies*-86)
- 767 Attack/Dual-Role Aircraft (US-586, Allies*-181)

Ground forces (expected to be ready by Feb--Troop figures do not include Naval or Airforce personnel)

- 503,000 Troops (US-310,000; Allies*-102,000; Members+-101,000)
- 3,070 Main Battle Tanks (US-1,502; Allies*-768; Members+-800)
- 3,350 Armored Personnel Carriers (US-2,000; Allies*-1,350)
- 943 Artillery pieces (US-500, Allies-443)
- 1,157 Helicopters (US-1,000; Allies-157)

Naval Forces

- 6 US Carriers
- 2 US Battleships
- 100 Assorted Warships (US-50, Allies-50)

* Allied figures are those that will probably support offensive action.

+ Members figures are those that will support defensive operations but will not support offensive operations.

CHAPTER IV: THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

Army Field Manual 100-5, Operations, states "Campaign plans set long term goals-strategic aims such as control of a geopolitical area, reestablishment of political boundaries, or defeat of an enemy force in the theater of operations. These must be accomplished in phases in most cases. Accordingly, the campaign plan normally provides both a general concept of operations for the entire campaign and a specific plan for the campaign's first phase. The commander must specify how the enemy is to be defeated. The method chosen must, of course, be attainable with the means at hand."¹

Chairman Aspin's explanations to reporters on his campaign concept come very close to addressing each point in the doctrinal definition. " Any war against Iraq would have the limited objective to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait. It is not a war to defeat and occupy the country of Iraq. It is not a war to go on to Baghdad... we will fight a phased campaign, one that begins with an air campaign against strategic and military targets in Iraq, then proceeds to a sustained air campaign against military forces in or near Kuwait and ends with the commitment of ground troops."²

A number of other key statements can be used to convey what might be called the commander's intent and guidance for the operation:

- "We have a good chance of scoring a rapid victory over

Iraqi forces... there is little concealment in the desert for Iraqi forces, and no friendly countries furnishing substantial supplies to Iraq, making Iraq troops vulnerable to attacks that interdict their supplies."³

- "When you're fighting a country like Iraq with a centralized government and one person running the show you knock out the control wires going to headquarters and I'm not sure they can operate on their own."⁴

- "Iraq's ballistic missiles will draw immediate fire to prevent Baghdad from attacking Israel, and embroiling the region in a possible Arab Israeli Conflict"⁵

- An " emphasis on using airpower in the early stages of the conflict...as many as 2000 combat missions a day...would enable the US to to deliver punishing strikes with relatively few casualties."⁶

- "I judge the risk of a bloody campaign with casualties in the 10,000 to 20,000 range to be small"⁷... a sustained ground attack would be used as a last resort, and would come after it was determined that Iraqi forces had been weakened."⁸

From these comments, and other comments made by Mr Aspin and the military analysts that briefed his committee an overall concept of the operation can be derived for analysis.

PHASE I--The concept of the operation is to conduct a large-scale air offensive against Iraqi strategic and military targets.

The objectives of phase I are to establish air superiority and destruction of Iraqi strategic weapons capabilities.

The planned actions to achieve these objectives include:

- attacks to destroy and disrupt command, control and communications centers;

- attacks to destroy and suppress air defense systems;
- attacks to destroy aviation assets and neutralize airfield operations;
- attacks to destroy ballistic missile systems;
- attacks to destroy chemical, nuclear, and biological storage sites and plants.

The resources to be applied in these actions include; US Airforce and Navy attack and fighter aircraft, Navy Tomahawk cruise missiles, B-52 Bombers, ground and airborne electronic warfare assets, along with the air forces of our allies (emphasis on Arab participation).⁹

PHASE II--The concept of the operation is to conduct sustained air attacks against Iraqi military forces.

The objective of phase II is destruction of Iraqi military potential.

- The planned actions to accomplish this objective include:
- attacks to destroy and disrupt ground force command, control and communication centers;
 - attacks to destroy and demoralize Iraqi troop concentrations;
 - attacks to interdict enemy highway and railway supply lines;
 - attacks to destroy Iraqi supply depots.

The resources to be applied in these actions are the same as phase I resources.¹⁰

PHASE III-- The concept of the operation is to conduct a three axis ground attack against Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti/southern Iraq area. A US Army armor heavy element will conduct an envelopment operation around the Iraqi western flank. Allied forces will conduct a holding attack against the central southern border of Kuwait. US Marine and British Armored forces will conduct a penetration in the east. (At the time of the article British forces were still attached to the 1st MEF. See figure 1)

The objective of phase III is destruction of the Iraqi theater reserve--the Republican Guards Divisions.

- The planned actions to accomplish this objective include:
- attacks to destroy Republican Guard units;
 - attacks to fix units in frontline defensive positions;
 - attacks to destroy and suppress local air defense and artillery systems;
 - integrated ground and air attack against Iraqi forces.

The resources to be applied in these actions include all previously listed assets plus; attack helicopters, naval gunfire, artillery fires, coalition ground forces.¹¹

CHAPTER V: MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

The military effectiveness of Chairman Aspin's campaign plan can be analyzed through the same self-questioning process that a theater commander or staff might use in developing an operational concept.¹ The process examines several areas critical to sound operational planning. Among them are campaign objectives, centers of gravity, vulnerabilities, resource application and considerations for successful war termination.

Will achievement of the campaign objectives accomplish US political goals?

President Bush has often stated the US political aims in the Gulf Crisis. They are: the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, restoration of the Kuwaiti's legitimate government, stability in the region, and the protection of US lives.²

Achievement of the campaign's main strategic objective--to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait--will accomplish the national aim of liberating Kuwait, and will facilitate the political objective of restoring the legitimate Kuwaiti government. The phased, progressive attack to destroy Iraqi airpower, chemical and biological weapons capability, nuclear weapon potential, and large conventional ground force elements will contribute to stability in the region by diminishing Iraq's ability to use military power against neighboring countries. The planned objectives do not include complete destruction of the Iraqi military. That could work at cross purposes with US national

aims. A defenseless Iraq would be an appealing target to it's long-time adversaries, Iran and Syria, and would be a destabilizing factor in the region.

Does the campaign strategy attack the Iraqi center of gravity?

Iraq has at least two centers of gravity. At the strategic level is the will for war--a measure of national determination and source of moral strength. At the operational level is the army--the concentrated mass of combat power which provides the capability for war.

The campaign plan does not directly attack the strategic level center of gravity. Clausewitz suggested that seizure of the enemy's capital, a potential center of gravity, was one method to decisively defeat the enemy.³ Other methods include destroying the legitimacy of the government, and making the cost of the war unbearable to the public. Mr. Aspin's limited campaign objectives exclude the capture of Baghdad and the overthrow of the government.⁴ It is doubtful that either Iraqi military casualties or destruction of defense and industry related facilities will lessen the national resolve. Massive aerial campaigns against the British and German populaces during World War II actually strengthened the national will.⁵

The campaign plan does a better job at targeting the operational level center of gravity--the army. The objective of phase III in the campaign is destruction of the Republican Guard forces--a vital component of the Iraqi army. The Republican Guards started as the personal guard of Hussein. They now

comprise between 15 and 25% of the total armed forces manpower (sources conflict). They are the best equipped and best trained units. During the Iran-Iraq War, they were frequently used as the main attack forces and counterattack elements.⁶ Destruction of this force could unbalance the entire Iraqi military, and remove part of the foundation to Saddam Hussein's power base .

Does the campaign plan protect US/Coalition centers of gravity?

CENTCOM also has at least two centers of gravity--the will of the American public, and the coalition of nations opposing Iraq. These centers of gravity are vulnerable to a variety of attacks.

Saddam Hussein has already stated that his forces will fight a war of attrition.⁷ His target is American will. A survey concluded on 13 January, 1991 found that 46% of the US population did not believe that military force should be used against Iraq. Two of the major reasons cited for avoiding war were fears of heavy casualties and a protracted conflict.⁸ The powerful impact of similar concerns had a dramatic effect during the Vietnam War. Realization of either of these fears again in a conflict with Iraq could upset the US center of gravity.

Mr. Aspin's operational concept explores the chances for a short war, and seeks to minimize casualties. The campaign's phased escalation in committing combat forces tests retired Air Force General Dugan's assertion that "air power alone can win the battle." Risking only air assets in the initial offensive actions lessens casualties. If the claim proves true then US

interests are well served without having paid a cost in ground troops. If the use of air power alone is not enough, then the intent is to "not commit ground troops until Iraqi forces are sufficiently weakened." Money and time will be expended rather than lives.

The Iraqi's have also targeted the coalition. The two main strategies are to exploit anti-US feelings in the gulf, and to attempt to convert the crisis into an Arab-Israeli conflict. The plan to fully integrate Arab forces in the campaign serves to counter certain aspects of these strategies. First, attempts by Iraqi propaganda to portray the war as a US initiated, US fought war for US purposes lose credibility. The combined operations of Egyptian, Kuwaiti, and Saudi forces fighting side by side with French, British and US units makes a stronger international statement. (It could also become the basis for better future political relations.) Second, during the Vietnam War, US military leaders made the mistake of frequently relegating the less important missions to the army units of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Eventually this practice adversely impacted on the combat effectiveness of the ARVN, and damaged the rapport and respect between allies.⁹ It looks like this mistake will not be repeated.

Saddam 's threat to immediately attack Israel is not an issue that can be solely handled by a military campaign plan. It can target SCUDs early, but an effective strategy requires additional means. Mr. Aspin recognized this and added diplomacy to the counter-strategy. Israel has "agreed to limit its military

response to retaliatory raids... Washington's Arab partners in it's coalition against Iraq expected such an Israeli response and would keep fighting."¹⁰

It appears that the coalition's center of gravities were a major planning consideration. The blend of political and military means provide a significant degree of protection.

Does the Campaign Strategy place Coalition Strengths against Iraqi weaknesses? Does it avoid Iraqi strengths?

The answers to these questions require a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses between the two opponents.

Coalition strengths are:¹¹

1. Operational level intelligence collection--Multi- dimensional assets--Space, aerial and surface collection systems.
2. Operational maneuver--Airborne and Air Assault (heliborne) capability, and Amphibious Operations capability
3. Theater sustainability--Better logistic system, greater ability to resupply and repair weapons systems.
4. Sea control and airpower--Free use of sea and air for all operations--denial for Iraqi use.
5. Larger overall manpower pool
6. Combat technology--night fighting capability, aerial tank killer systems, main battle tank's and armored personnel carrier armament and mobility.

Coalition Weaknesses are:¹²

1. Less numbers of ground troops, tanks and artillery in the combat area.
2. Lack of combat experience
3. Huge fuel resupply requirements
4. Coalition's bond between Arab and non-Arab nations

Iraqi strengths are:¹³

1. Strong defensive positions--6 months preparation, Soviet training, battle tested techniques
2. Familiar with terrain, accustomed to climate and conditions
3. Experienced in desert warfare--Iran-Iraq war lessons
4. Larger numbers of troops, tanks and artillery in battle area
5. Violatile political arena
6. Chemical weapon threat--intent and capability.

Iraqi weaknesses are:¹⁴

1. Limited ability to repair and/or replace components for high tech weapon systems--Mirage, T-72 Tank, helicopters, air defense radars
2. Vulnerable lines of communication--distance, concealment
3. Lack of naval assets
4. Limited air assets
5. Supply shortages--blockade

The intense aerial campaign is an effective cumulative strategy. It pits the coalition strengths of airpower, sea control and operational sustainment against the Iraqi vulnerabilities in high-tech equipment repair, and severed foreign supply lines. During the campaign, Iraqi forces will suffer irreparable and irreplaceable losses of sophisticated weapons due to both combat and normal maintenance problems. The cumulative effect will increasingly degrade Iraqi combat power.

The campaign plan fully exploits the coalition's advantages in intelligence collection. These resources are incorporated in the targeting and early warning processes.

The details of the strategy for phase III are rather sketchy. However a couple points can be examined.

First, despite sea and air control, the ground campaign strategy does not include specific plans to employ the airborne, amphibious or air assault units in their specialized roles. Instead they are attached to the forces that will conduct the eastern and western attacks. The intent may be that the attacking force commanders choose the manner to employ their specialized skills but that is purely conjecture.

Second, US and British ground and air forces possess a superior ability to acquire and attack targets during periods of

limited visibility.¹⁵ Daylight operations would mitigate this advantage.

Third, the ground strategy fully exploits the mobility and combat power of the armor-heavy US forces in a rapid envelopment operation around the Iraqi western flank. This operation will cut the vulnerable lines of communication between Baghdad and the Iraqi defensive positions. However, it is also important to note that the fuel consumption and refueling requirements of such an operation will be immense. Interruption of the flow of fuel, especially during a counter-attack by the Tank Divisions of the Republican Guards, could have tragic results.

The final point is that the ground strategy pits the coalition forces against an Iraqi strength. Allied forces will be doing just what Saddam Hussein wants by attacking a well entrenched enemy, with superiority in personnel numbers, tank quantities, and artillery numbers and range. This point will be discussed in greater detail during the next question.

Are the campaign objectives and strategy consistent with force size and structure?

The Phase I and II campaign objectives of Mr. Aspin's plan are attainable with the force size and structure. Coalition air strength is sufficient to accomplish the objectives of air superiority and reduction of Iraqi military potential.

The phase III campaign strategy is more risky. The total size of Coalition ground forces, that will support an offensive operation, is actually smaller than the Iraqi defensive force.

The coalition ground forces are task organized into three elements for the attack.

The western element's force size and structure is roughly equivalent to 4 armored divisions, 2 mechanized infantry divisions and an air assault division. It's mission is to envelope the Iraqi western flank, seal off the lines of communication, and defeat the Republican Guards units. During the operation, the eastern element must travel approximately 250 miles, and engage and defeat 4 tank divisions, 4 motorized rifle divisions and 4 infantry divisions. As the attack progresses, the enveloping force will become reliant on extended supply lines and on depend on close air support to soften enemy positions, screen flanks, and disrupt enemy counter-attacks.

The force organization of the central coalition element consists of two Egyptian tank divisions, two Saudi heavy divisions, a motorized French division, and about a division of mixed Moslem forces. Their mission is to attack and fix 3 Iraqi armored/mechanized divisions (2 of which form the tactical reserve) and 5 infantry divisions, and to exploit local success. Organizing the units of the gulf region together improves the overall effectiveness of the coalition. It reduces the confusion and chances of blue on blue casualties caused by languages and equipment differences and the fog of war. It lessens political and physical command and control difficulties of such a diverse organization.

The element conducting the eastern assault consists of 2 US Marine divisions, an airborne infantry division, and a tank

division. Their mission is to penetrate the Iraqi defensive line, and roll up the flank of the five Iraqi infantry divisions defending along the coast. Task organizing the eastern element with an armored division rounds out the combined arms balance, and increases their ability to rapidly exploit a breakthrough. Concentrating the marines on the coast allows the unit to maintain its habitual marine and naval air, and gunfire support.

The coalition force structure does not include an operational reserve. Instead, it appears airpower will be used to rapidly mass combat power about the theater of war--weather permitting.

With each of the three attack forces inferior to its opposition, and without a strategic reserve, the operation is heavily reliant on the effects of the air campaign, and the combat force multipliers--superior quality soldiers, weapons technology, intelligence, air support, logistics--to achieve the force ratios necessary to overcome the defense. In World War II, the Japanese defenders of Guam were incessantly strafed, bombed and shelled for over twenty days. By the day of the invasion, the tropical island was as cratered and barren as a moonscape. As the landing forces approached, most of the defenders were still able to emerge from their bunkers and man the fighting positions they had spent months preparing. Outnumbered and shell shocked, the defenders made the US Marines and Army pay dearly for the small island.¹⁸ A similar situation exists in the Kuwaiti theater. Rooting the Iraqis out of their layered defensive positions could be just as costly.

On the positive side, a strength of the plan is the full

integration of combined and joint services. Each branch of service, of each country, in the force structure plays an important role in the campaign plan. Together they have the synergistic ability to achieve victory.

Does the campaign strategy contribute to war termination on favorable terms?

Mr. Fred Ickle, in his book Every War Must End, advocates that the operational commander must consider what successful war termination would look like before developing a campaign strategy.¹⁷ What would successful war termination in the Gulf crisis look like from a US perspective? One set of conditions that could be used to describe it is: expulsion of Iraqi forces, reestablish Kuwaiti self government, regional stability, an acceptable war cost, improved US relations in the region, favorable world and national opinion, reparations for the war's expense, and the beginnings of a United Nations collective security pact. If the campaign is successful, will these conditions exist?

The first two conditions will exist if Mr. Aspin's campaign objectives are achieved. There is also a good chance for regional stability. At first glance, the limited aims of the plan may appear to conflict with the notion that Saddam Hussein must be removed from power for stability. Why is that necessary? A continuing threat to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia may be in the best US interests. First, if Saddam believes that the coalition will not accept anything short of his overthrow or the near-total

destruction of Iraqi military power then he will be a more desperate and ruthless adversary. Sun Tzu advocates always leaving the enemy an escape route. A cornered enemy is the most dangerous.¹⁸ Second, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will be more apt to maintain a closer relationship with a powerful ally like the US. They could offer the US some interesting economic and political proposals, and any resulting agreements would be an improvement over pre-war relations. Third, they may request security assistance and open the door for a UN collective security resolution. Of course Saddam will be an adamant and vocal enemy of the US, but the US has already weathered the tirades of Ayatollah Khomeini and Momar Khadafi. Saddam will have his own domestic cups of poison and regional relations to worry about.

The conduct of the ground campaign seems to have the greatest potential to damage the US chances for favorable war termination. A three pronged attack against a firmly entrenched defender will result in significant US casualties, and severe damage to Kuwait. Will the US public view the war as victorious if Iraq is defeated at a huge cost in American lives? Can the US afford to write off the enormous cost of the war, if the Kuwaiti government does not pay the funds it promised because a nationwide rebuilding program is necessary? Both of these scenarios are possible in the proposed scheme of maneuver, and they could sour the taste of victory. A short and moderately expensive ground campaign seems necessary for success. The next chapter lists recommendations for Mr. Aspin's proposal that could improve US prospects for war termination on favorable terms.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

The campaign strategy of Chairman Aspin addresses all of the essential elements of sound operational planning. It establishes the military conditions to be attained, the phased activities to achieve those conditions, and the resources to be applied in each phase. Its plan for integrating the air, land, and naval assets in the campaign adheres to the basic doctrinal principles of the Army, Navy and Air force. However, there remains room for improvement. The following recommendations are offered to enhance the effectiveness of the plan:

- Maintain the limited strategic objectives. Total destruction of the army and/or elimination of Hussein are not in the best national interests.
- Resist the pressures to produce rapid results in the war. Conduct the air campaign as long as possible.
- Attack Iraq's strategy not their strength. Don't storm well prepared defensive positions that have excellent artillery support. Lure Iraqi forces out with a threat against Baghdad.
- Don't focus the campaign on Kuwaiti soil. Bring the war home to the Iraq nation and lessen the damage to the Kuwaiti infrastructure. It may change the Iraqi national will for war.
- Exploit the operational mobility of the airborne, air assault, and amphibious units. Threaten the enemy's rear areas and flanks. Force Iraq to commit and/or expose troops in response to these threats.
- Ensure the Kuwaiti and Arab forces are also involved in any heavy combat against well entrenched Iraqi forces. Let them be associated with the damage, and share the cost in casualties.
- Anticipate and plan for the culminating point on the envelopment operation.
- Exploit the US advantages in night fighting technology.



IRAQ

IRAN

Republican Guards
Strategic Reserve
- 3 armored divisions
- 2 motorized divisions

Flank
- 3 infantry divisions
- 1 motorized division

Tactical Reserve
- 2 motorized divisions

Coastal Defense
- 5 infantry divisions

Forward Defensive Line
- 2 motorized divisions
- 4 infantry divisions

- 2 US armored divisions
- air assault division
- cavalry division
- 2 mechanized infantry divisions
- 2 cavalry regiments

- 2 Saudi heavy divisions
- 2 Egyptian tank divisions
- French motorized division
- division assorted Moslem

- 1 Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)

- British armored division
- airborne division
- 2 MEF (afloat)

25 miles

Saudi Arabia

NOTES

Chapter I

1. (16:A1)
2. (16:A1)
3. (24:24,25,46)

Chapter II

1. (28:47)
2. (28:47)
3. (31:26)
4. (31:26)
5. (38:A1)
6. (38:A1)
7. (17:A10)
8. (17:A1)
9. (11:A18)
10. (38:38,39)
11. (6:26-32)(25:16)(1:22-24)(21:975)(5:11)

Chapter III

1. (8:3)
2. (4:8,9)
3. (15:A9)
4. (6:26-32)(25:16)(1:22-24)(21:975)(5:11)

Chapter IV

1. (3:29)
2. (16:A6)
3. (16:A6)

4. (33:A17)(24:24,25,46) Mr. Aspin's comments are not very detailed on the ground campaign. The general scheme of maneuver is drawn from the plans presented before the House Armed Services Committee and described in the cited references.
5. (33:A17)
6. (16:A6)
7. (16:A6)
8. (16:A1)
9. (43:1)(16:A1,A6)(33:17)
10. (43:1)(16:A1,A6)(33:17)
11. (24:24,25,46)

Chapter V

1. (26:1-27) The idea for the format and the questions were borrowed from the cited reference.
2. (8:3)
3. (9:596)
4. (16:A1)
5. (23:165-185)
6. (28:Notes)
7. (18:A18)
8. (30:A11) It's interesting to note how the success of the air campaign has influenced US public opinion, and changed their views on the use of force. The latest polls show a majority of citizens approving the decision to use force. Some surveys were as high 75%. The center gravity remains vulnerable though. Public opinion can easily change.
9. (42:189-217)
10. (16:A6)
11. (41:3)(35:1215)(20:26)
12. (41:3)(35:1215)(20:26)

13. (41:3)(35:1215)(20:26)

14. (41:3)(35:1215)(20:26)

15. (13:20)

16. (7:294-317)

17. (18:1-58)

18. (39:109,110)

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